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ABSTRACT

The reported "malaise" of college instructors of the social sciences, particularly in political science, has its roots in the attempt to model the social sciences after the natural sciences and thus to separate fact from value. Scientific method requires that politics be redefined as an activity involving relationships of power, rule, and authority and the discovery of principles of political action. The result is a wholesale corruption of our understanding of the institutions of American government. For example, the "Federalist Papers" determined that separation of powers was designed to combine the requisite energy and stability in government with inviolable attention to liberty and majority rule (Federalist #37) and that the press was a medium through which to pass the necessarily partisan sentiments of leaders and citizens (Federalist #10). These ideals are far from the interpretations of current political scientific thought. A conflict, then, is created between the originating principles of political science and its ongoing public responsibility. The result is that many political scientists have lost heart. An emphasis on values clarification, suggested by many, would only further reduce the discipline by entrapping it in educational consumerism. There is a need to return to the edifying and disciplining influence of higher education, as its founders in this country intended it to be. (KC)

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INSTRUCTOR APATHY AND THE MALAISE OF LISTLESS COLLEGES
PART 1: A PATHOLOGIST'S REPORT ON THE FACT-VALUE DISTINCTION

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INSTRUCTOR APATHY AND THE MALAISE OF LISTLESS COLLEGES
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Our concern today is with instructor apathy, a mild form of that general problem often referred to as "burnout." Its symptoms include a loss of interest in the subject, a turn to administration, a preoccupation with campus politics, and an increased absorbtion in outside hobbies and vocations. As such, it is common to all disciplines and all levels of education. But within the social sciences it takes on the unique form of a debilitating and destructive self-doubt about the importance, or to use the current buzzword--"relevance", of the subjects we profess. We believe that the doubts are real and, more importantly, that they are both well-founded and widely held. In the course of this session, we will attempt to deal both with the nature and foundations of those doubts and with what we believe to be the necessary antidotes to them. We will begin with a brief history of the social sciences (political science and history primarily, but also economics, psychology, and sociology.)

In 1787 one of the organic laws established for the new Northwest Territory contained certain provisions for a system of public education, it being necessary, the law announced, for the maintenance of good morals among the citizenry and hence for the maintenance of a free society. Thus was established the rationale for a system of public education, a system of education that was public or related directly to the political things by virtue of its singular responsibility for the development of good character or republican virtue. This idea reappears throughout our history in the works of, among others, Horace Mann and John Dewey, and it has been institutionalized in the centers of liberal education. But the most complete exposition of the principles of the system of public, higher education is in the exchanges between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison as they worked to establish the University of Virginia.

Both men began from the premise that the good character of the people is a sine qua non of good political health. Both men also understood that it was beyond the scope of the authority of a limited government to undertake directly the task of forming the character of its citizens. (To the extent that it did, government would cease to be limited government.) Thus their major concern in defining the curriculum and readings of the university's political science program was to so organize the discipline that it could do for the larger society what it could not legitimately do for itself. The centerpiece of the program was extensive reading in such classics of republicanism as John Locke, the Declaration of Independence, and The Federalist. Implicit in this was the assumed existence of an intimate bond of common sympathy, interest, concerns, and horizons between "town and gown." In the broadest sense the relationship was one of ends and means, with the ends being defined by the regime's first principles and the means being provided by the university. It almost goes without saying that there was no intention to train syncopants or mere technicians. Instead, as the prescribed readings suggest, enlightenment was to be the true function of a higher education in government. Thus trained, the students were then to go on to become the leaders of the country and, as leaders, the educators of the people, receiving from the people the

popular sentiments and views and refining and enlarging them as they passed them through the medium of their knowledge of the true principles of republicanism.

We turn now to a survey of the criticisms leveled at the social sciences. We begin by stressing that the Jeffersonian-Madisonian view of the responsibilities of "gown to town" is implicit in them all, and that in all cases they take the general form of indicting the social sciences for their failure to live up to those responsibilities. Their value lies not in their truth but only in their capacity to illustrate the current sense that the social sciences have abandoned their historic responsibilities.

The saprophyte of the sixties, the new left, attacked the traditional social sciences for their indifference to the central concerns of that era--Viet Nam and civil rights. It demanded a relevant education, that is, one dedicated to "social justice" or income redistribution. Cult figures such as Timothy Leary and Ken Kesey denounced the rigid scientism of the academy for its refusal to explore the regions of the "authentic self" as they led a lemming-like and drug induced exodus from the universities in search of that "holy grail." Others, finding no "meaning" within the institutions, turned to yoga, gurus, mysticism, eastern religions, and communes in search of the springs from which flowed the "identity" of the "liberated self." Still others, to the accompaniment of much media fanfare, dropped out of places like Harvard Business School in order to recapture their "proletarian roots" in various blue collar trades. On the "right", Fundamentalist churches enrolled many students who had become convinced that the academic curriculum offered them nothing but "spiritual impoverishment" at best and "atheism" at worst. Finally, there was the violent underground of the Weathermen and the S.L.A. which was born and nurtured in the academy and which was committed to the discovery of "values" through the medium of nihilistic violence. Through it all, the password was "alienation", a term coined to refer to both the disintegration of the connection between the public and private regimes or ways of life and to indict the social sciences for their complicity in that estrangement.

Now, we do not mean to suggest that any of these critics were Jeffersonian in their criticisms. They weren't. Nor are we contending that one can ignore the role in such attacks of that perennial "baker's dozen" of the human vices--greed, envy, ambition, anger, and so on. One can't. But when the general sense of the affected community seems to point in the same invariant direction, one cannot ignore that fact. And certainly it is true that those in the social sciences have listened, as they have attempted to reform their disciplines at least somewhat along the lines called for by their critics. Nor has there been a dearth of criticisms coming from within the social sciences themselves.

"Learned authorities" announced that "the medium was the message." "New approaches" and "non-traditional" courses were called for by leaders within the field. "Relevance" and "sensitivity" became bywords on campus,

as educators everywhere rushed to outdo each other in becoming "innovative." Out of all of this came multi-media programs, team teaching, interdisciplinary studies, computer assisted instruction, values clarification programs, games theory, role playing, sensitivity training, black, ethnic, and women's studies programs, departments, and centers, and, last but not least, gay studies. At the present time we find ourselves exhausted but also greatly relieved by the fact that hard economic times have produced an increasing student and community demand for a more traditional education which, by now, we are quite willing to provide. But in many respects we are like the French aristocrats who could learn nothing from and forget nothing of the French revolution that had rolled over them. For beyond the confession implicit in our actions that we are no longer discharging our responsibility as educators in democratic citizenship, we have evidenced almost no understanding of the cause of our dilemma.

In our present condition, it becomes necessary to remember the words of the immortal Pogo: "I has seen the enemy, and they is us." Specifically, the enemy is the fact-value distinction, a distinction that has entrapped the minds and disarmed the hearts of most of those who have professed the afflicted disciplines for the last two or three generations. This distinction, survives today at the level of our conscious expression in the form of references to "values", "value judgments", and "ideals", and it is the product of an attempt to model the study of politics after the epistemology and research methods of the highly successful natural sciences.

At the core of the natural sciences is the empiricist epistemology or theory of knowledge, the function of which is to define the "facts" that are the objects of scientific study and to establish the principles of causation by which those "facts" are to be explained. "Facts" are defined as the motions of matter or bodies, the regularity and hence predictability of which is the function of the operation of their material and efficient causes. These principles of causation are universal in their operation because the matter in which they operate is incapable of volition and their operation is expressed in quantifiable magnitudes of force. To illustrate, if one knows the angle of impact and speed of two billiard balls, one can absolutely predict the angle of reflection and distance traveled after impact. The purpose of modern natural science was set forth by Francis Bacon who defined knowledge as power and who pledged science to the relief of the human estate. In the natural sciences this led to the physics of Einstein and the technological explosion of the twentieth century. In the social sciences it led to the new empirical or behavioral science of politics.

The attempt to model the latter after the former required an abstraction from the element of volition or final causation that had been traditionally understood as the defining element of political life. This was necessary because the admission that final causation was a political "fact" would diminish the predictive capacity of the new science of politics. It also required that politics be redefined as an activity involving relationships of power, rule, and authority, with the further understanding that such relationships be studied in the "abstract" or

not with reference to the traditional question of the ends to which such relationships were directed. This is not to say that final causation disappeared as a "fact" of the new science. Rather it meant, in keeping with the scientific reduction of causation to the material and the efficient, that such relationships were henceforth to be deduced from those causal roots. This led to the discovery of such "principles" of political action as adverse toilet training experiences at age two, authoritarian, laissez faire, or democratic personality types, any one of which was likely to have been the product of a childhood experience, and various sorts of ethnic, racial, national, or economic interests. The general "formula" that explained the relationship of such factors to political activity was the materialists' assertion that "thought follows production." Over time, the repeated application of this "scientific rule" led to a profound and deleterious change in our understanding of the fundamental problem of political life.

That new understanding can be expressed in the form of a question: How can the freedom of man be preserved in a wholly "determined" universe the greatest "power center" of which is government in the possession of both a monopoly of legality and scientific power? For it has surely escaped the attention of no one that the same technology which has delivered man from nature has also delivered him into the hands of the most bestial tyrannies--witness Marxism and Nazism--that he has ever known. The revised agenda of "humanism" quickly came to be concentrated around the effort to work out a modus vivendi between that freedom which is the spirit of liberal democracy and the awesome power over man that governments now possessed.

This led first to a rejection of the traditional notion that there is a large number of legitimate regimes, regimes that solve the problem of justice to the fullest extent a given people is capable of solving that problem. This led next to the reduction of the number of regimes to two: liberal democracies which are legitimate and all other regimes which are not, except, of course, when their claims to harbor liberal democratic aspirations are believed. Finally, even this distinction disappeared as it was "discovered" that the claims of all regimes, including the American, to be founded on principles of right are cover-ups for their "real" foundations in some principle of material causation, characteristically "identified" as the wealth of the "haves." In this regard, Charles Beard's economic interpretation of the Constitution was the pathfinder for American political science, and while subsequent researchers widely disputed his findings, few if any of them, rejected his premises. The habit, ingrained in several generations of American political scientists of proceeding from the assumed "oligarchic" character of government and of marrying to that assumption the democratic longing to liberate men from that scourge has led to a wholesale corruption of our understanding of the institutions of American government.

This appears in the notion that separation of powers was designed to create a set of three opposite and equal governing powers balanced

so precisely that government as a whole could not "impose" its will on others, imposition in this case being the social equivalent of material determinism and both being inimical to freedom. This has led to a discipline-wide "celebration" of those institutional conflicts between, say, Congress and the President that have produced political deadlock which is ironically praised as the fulfillment of the intention of the Founders. A long line of Supreme Court decisions in such areas as criminal procedure, religious freedoms, and, particularly, freedom of the press have both reflected and reinforced the conception that the imposition of "community values" is the "true" threat to personal liberty. Out of this, too, has emerged the belief in the necessity of an adversary press, the concommitants of which are the constitutional doctrine of the superordination of the First Amendment to the rest of the document and the preferred position of the press vis a vis the formal institutions of the government. In this it is felt that the press's "objectivity" or its determination not to "impose partisan values" on its readers, as is the converse habit of the political parties, uniquely qualifies it for its special role as steward of liberty. One can see in all of this the Rousseauian dictum that man is born free and is everywhere in chains, as one can also read in it the frenzied longing to transcend the state of society in favor of the "unconditioned" existence that is seen to be in nature and by nature.

It is not difficult to demonstrate that this is a false representation of the principles and institutions of American government. For example, separation of powers was designed, as Madison demonstrates in Federalist #37, to combine the requisite energy and stability in government with the inviolable attention to liberty and majority rule. Paper #10 teaches that the representative institutions are designed to refine and enlarge the public views and not to systematically thwart their expression. The party press was designed by Jefferson and Madison as a medium through which to pass the necessarily partisan sentiments of leaders and citizens. Such rejoinders are, of course, dismissed by the partisans of the new science as being either or both hopelessly idealistic and throughly unscientific. As to the question of who is right in this, we are struck by two considerations.

First, we note that while the varying notions of nature do not alter nature, they have an enormous capacity for altering our understanding of society. Second, we are struck by the sharp distinction between the judgments our disciplines permit us to make and those that we habitually make as citizens. As citizens of one regime among many in the world, we know that the uses to which power is put constitute the decisive political facts whereas our disciplines demand that we eschew professional judgments about the goodness or badness of those ends. As citizens of this regime, we judge the efficacy of our institutions by their capacity for achieving what we regard as the desirable ends of public policy. Yet our disciplines call for us to present government without reference to or evaluation of those ends. As citizens we learn to appreciate the difference between sound and well-informed political judgments and their frivolous and fanciful

counterparts. However, the reductionism of our disciplines requires us to present all political opinions as equally and alike expressions of ideology. As citizens we understand our opinions as, at least, offered in the spirit of the truth. Our disciplines deny that possibility, their premise being, as we have seen, that thought rises out of material and efficient causes above which it cannot rise. This war of ourselves against ourselves is macrocosmically repeated in the war of our disciplines with both their originating principles and their ongoing public responsibility, as we have seen. In this condition it is not surprising to see that so many of our colleagues have "lost heart" with their profession.

Now, some have suggested that by emphasizing "values clarification" we can avoid the ennui into which the disciplines have sunk. This is a remedy that is truly worse than the disease. We begin by asking: What are these "values" that are to be "clarified?" Whatever they are, "values" are posited by the "self." But what is the "self?" The "self" is reminiscent of natural man as seen by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. His distinguishing characteristics are his radical asociality and his unalienable possession of what was called the executive power of the state of nature. The meaning of the former is that there is no "other"--no person, group, or institution--that he feels himself drawn toward. This is so because the oppressive scarcity of the bare necessities of life is so great that all of his thoughts turn into himself and are for himself alone. The latter is merely an inference from this: his right to liberate himself from that oppressive scarcity carries with it the power to choose, entirely for himself, any and everything that in his judgment is necessary to that end. What may then be described as a selfishness beyond selfishness produces the Hobbesian war of all against all, the stark terror of which extorts from man his first degree of rationality. This consists in the prudent calculation of self-denial that Hobbes renders by the formula, "do not unto others as you would have them not do unto you." Unanimous consent to the social contract is the mechanism that enforces that calculation, for the right of all to withdraw what once was given and thus to throw all back into that primordial terror from which they had just escaped compels each to undertake an active consideration of the claims of the other. And the subsequent agreement by all to replace the executive power of the state of nature with that of civil society makes "permanent" the abandonment of the state of nature. The gains, to the accounts of security of life, abundance of property, and justice were so great as, for a long time, to destroy any longing to recapture a "paradise lost." But the reduction of political life to quantums of power by the new science of politics produced a "disease of the remedy", and this consisted in the "discovery" of "values."

The old science of politics understood what we call "values" as principles of right, of justice, and of the common good. It understood the central political fact to be disputes and conflicts over these principles. It accepted the task of mediating such conflicts, of rising above conflicting and contradictory partisan opinion to the ground of true opinion. This was, as we have seen, the political or public responsibility of public education. Beyond this was the function of the statesman whose responsibility was to reconcile the primary requirement of consent with the higher requirement of

wisdom. Finally, it was understood that the capacity of mankind for self-government rested entirely on his ability to inform consent with those principles of right or justice, and that the perpetuation of self-government depended on the enforcement, both solemn and coercive, of those principles by government. But having reduced the principles of political life to those of material and efficient causation, the new science of politics found itself repelled by the thought that the principles of any set of men could be "imposed" on others, and the "imposition of values" quickly came to be seen as the greatest of all political evils. Relief from this was discovered in the relativity of all "values," that is, in claiming for each self both the power and, more importantly, the right to fully insulate itself from even the sense of being accountable to principles of right emanating from any source other than each "unique and precious self." In order to prevent a relapse into that Hobbesian war of all against all, it became necessary to erect the equality of all "values" as the "absolute value" of free society. Moral-political autonomy for each and perfect community for all would then be the hallmarks of the pluralistic society. As we have seen, the extension of this principle to cover the claims of every "authentic self" has been responsible for the moral-political wreckage of the recent past. We must now turn to the damage it has done to higher education in the social sciences.

The act of cultivating and disciplining the mind is necessarily aristocratic. It depends on recognizing the gap that separates the great minds who are at the frontiers of knowledge from their adherents and their student neophytes. It depends further on cultivating both a deep respect for those great minds and a sense of the importance and even urgency of a serious and active participation in their thought. It also requires docility or an habitual willingness to suspend or even discard one's convictions in the face of the contrary claims of the great minds. But that "absolute value" of free society, that "democratization" of the intellect, is like a corrosive acid for these aristocratic habits.

One notes the prevalence of the denunciations of the great writers; for example, of Solzhenitsyn for being a "Slavophile" and worse, of Shakespeare for the "racism" of Othello and the "sexism" of The Taming of the Shrew, of De Tocqueville for his "aristocratic bias," and of Plato for his "anti-democratic prejudices." The "crime" in all such cases is the great minds' habit of doubting or even disagreeing with the "values" posited by the "authentic self." To the extent that we acquiesce in their conviction, we permit ourselves to be cut off from the deepest sources of our disciplines, and to the extent that we become estranged from those sources, we make ourselves easy victims for the most recent trend in ideological fashion. Being trapped in this kind of educational "consumerism" cannot help but be a disturbing and enervating position, and the most obvious expression of this is the lifelessness that is characteristic of all too many of our colleagues.

The damage done to our students is, if possible, even greater. Their all-too-typical reluctance to work, and a serious study of the great minds is work, is compounded and reinforced by that preemptive

dismissal of the great minds for purveying their various "isms." The facility with which students dismiss sentiments and views contrary to their own as merely different "value judgments" is a characteristic of minds that are determined to remain immune to the edifying and disciplining influence of higher education, and which are confirmed in such a determination by that ideological reinforcement. This void of serious thought is filled by the prevailing currents in ideology and politics. These currents are largely formed by the restless "self" as it searches for "authentication," this being the name for the "youthful" revolt against convention on behalf of a "natural freedom" that is at the same time a radical version of natural man and the prologue to ideological or theoretical tyranny. Out of this has come a generation ill-equipped in heart and mind for life in a decent regime and informed, instead, by that species of "romanticism" that has been the progenitor of the monstrous regimes of the twentieth century. That students in the last few years have become much more moderate is not to be credited to our disciplines, for that new sobriety is a reflection of hard economic times and not of anything they have learned from us.

The best way to describe our present condition is this: We are in an artificial pit beneath the floor of Plato's natural cave. That artificial pit is entirely of our own making, excavated as it has been by the "scientism" of the new science of politics. That "scientism" consists, in the first instance, of a new conception of politics which is foreign to the understanding of the denizens of the natural cave. It consists, in the second instance, of a solution to the problem manufactured by that new conception that can only deepen our excavation into that artificial pit. Our most urgent task is then to return to the edifying heights of the natural cave.